

The Sun

WILLIAM M. LAFAN.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1903.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.
 DAILY, Per Month.....\$2 00
 DAILY, Per Year.....\$20 00
 SUNDAY, Per Year.....\$5 00
 DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year.....\$25 00
 POSTAGE TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES, PER ANNUM.....\$3 00

THE SUN, NEW YORK CITY.
 PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM M. LAFAN.
 PRINTED BY THE SUN, NEW YORK CITY.

It is our friends who favor us with manuscripts for publication who are to have rejected articles returned. They must in all cases send stamps for that purpose.

The Independence of Panama.

The State of Panama would have everything to gain by secession from Colombia and independence of the usurping Bogota Government headed by Dr. MARROQUIN.

Panama derives no benefit whatever from its connection with the Colombian Confederation. It cannot even rely on Confederation officials for the maintenance of order in connection with the service it has depended on the United States for upward of half a century. From the date of its emancipation from Spanish rule it has been oppressed and plundered by the Bogota authorities. Were Panama an independent republic the proceeds of all the taxes now levied for the benefit of a remote central government would be expended at home. Immigration and the inflow of foreign capital would be immensely stimulated by the knowledge that the reign of corrupt officials deputed to Panama from Bogota was over.

Let it once be understood on the Isthmus that the completion of the great waterway has been thwarted by the greed of the Colombian authorities, and a general uprising of the inhabitants of Panama for political independence may not be distant.

The notion that the boon of an inter-oceanic canal can be long withheld by gangs of South American blackmailers will prove to be ill founded. The canal will be built, and the United States will control it.

The Treasury's Call for Its Deposits.

The announcement that the Secretary of the Treasury has asked the national banks with which the Government money has been deposited on other collateral security than that of Government bonds to substitute Government bonds for such security before Aug. 1 next should not disturb anybody, not even the speculators in Wall Street. The security, aside from Government bonds, thus pledged with the Secretary of the Treasury amounts to a little over \$20,000,000 and is mostly in first-class State and municipal bonds. The emergency which called for their deposit is over, and so far as we can see, the banks of the country are now in a condition of sufficient affluence to return to normal conditions.

We think that every one realizes that while the action of Secretary SHAW in depositing Government money upon a pledge of other collateral than that of the bonds of the Government itself was of great temporary benefit to the financial world, it was, nevertheless, a proceeding of questionable legality. It was a measure of inflation justified, perhaps, in time of stress, but not for permanent continuance.

What Congress should now do is so to amend the Federal statutes as either to give the Secretary of the Treasury clearly and unquestionably the freedom which he exercised in this case or to limit it with equal clearness so that all doubt on this very delicate and important question shall be removed. The chief danger, of course, in allowing the Treasury to deposit Government money in the way that has been done is that at a future time the Treasury may be in the hands of those who will be disposed to use the power too liberally and so, instead of allaying public alarm in a financial emergency, increase it.

Bible Reading in the Public Schools.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of New York, in his annual report to the Legislature, refers to a provision of the Charter of the city of New York in justification of his policy of refusing to interfere with the reading of the Bible in the public schools.

The provision is in Section 1151 and is to this effect:

"No teacher or other person shall be authorized by the Board of Education or the School Board of any borough to exclude the Holy Scriptures, without vote or consent, or any selections therefrom, from any of the schools provided for by this chapter; but it shall not be provided for the said Board of Education to decide what version, if any, of the Holy Scriptures, without vote or consent, shall be used in any of the schools, provided that nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to violate the rights of conscience, as secured by the Constitution of this State and of the United States."

To whom the selection of the version of the Bible to be used is to be intrusted does not appear from this provision. Obviously some English version must be used in the schools. Nor is there any definition of the "Holy Scriptures," though there are differences of canon which sharply divide the religious world. The Jewish canon, of course, excludes the New Testament. The Roman Catholic canon differs from the Protestant. The Bible as it exists in the King James translation is received as canonically complete by Protestants generally, but not by the majority of Christians and by the majority of Christian believers in New York.

Accordingly, in times past, opposition to the reading of the Bible in the King James version has come from Roman Catholics, but of late we have heard little of it, probably because that Church welcomes any sort of recognition of religion in the schools, and its canon of the Scriptures includes all those in that version, although the form of the translation does not receive its approval. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction avers, moreover, that during the seven years of his connection with that department he has "never known of an appeal or protest from any inhabitant of the city of New York with

reference to reading the Bible in the public schools of that city, although it has been daily read in every one therein during all that period."

We observe, however, that the Jewish inhabitants of New York, increased rapidly from a comparatively small number to five or six hundred thousand, or about one quarter of the total population of the Manhattan borough, where they live almost wholly, are now beginning to make such protests. A writer from the Ghetto, in a recent number of the *American Hebrew*, complains bitterly of the "missionary campaign" for the propagation of Christianity among the Jews which, he alleges, is carried on by "some of the public school principals." He instances a school on the East Side, with an attendance from 90 to 95 per cent. Jewish, where, according to his allegation, the principal "has persisted for years in reading from the New Testament at the morning exercises." This practice of "dealing out Christianity to Jewish children" he represents as a violation of the Constitutional rights of conscience, on the ground that it is using the schools for religious purposes which conflict with the faith and conviction of a large part of the people. It seems to him, and not much unreasonably, that "there is not much discretion in the hands of the principals," under the section of the Charter we have quoted.

It will be seen, therefore, that the question of Bible reading in the schools has taken on a new phase, and more particularly in New York, now the seat of the greatest Jewish population in the world. This Jewish population, too, is growing so rapidly by immigration and by an especially large natural increase that it is likely to be one million at the end of the present decade. Moreover, the Jews of New York are distinguished by their interest in the public schools, the cleverest pupils of which are frequently if not usually of Jewish birth. Until recently we have heard little from them on the subject of Bible reading as a school exercise, but it looks now as if, with their great increase in numbers and influence, they would be likely to insist on making their influence felt in deciding this question.

The Turning Down of Sulzer.

The Sulzer publicity scheme was rejected in the House of Representatives on Saturday last by a vote of 90 to 75. It was offered as an amendment to the bill creating a Department of Commerce and Labor. All the Democrats present at the time voted for the Sulzer amendment, and all the Republicans voted against it.

Mr. SULZER had studied the subject of trust-repression on lines quite independent of those followed by Mr. LITTLEFIELD, Senator HOAR, or the Attorney-General. He had reached the conclusion that the existing Sherman law would be entirely adequate, and that prosecutions under that act could be made effective, if the Department of Justice were only enabled to get at the facts through the agency of a bureau of investigation. His amendment established such a bureau in connection with the proposed new executive department. Mr. SULZER said on Saturday:

"Adopt this amendment offered by me for publicity regarding the trusts and monopolies, make it a part of this bill so that it will become a law, and the Attorney-General will get all the facts he wants and official facts that will be evidence sufficient to win every case against every trust violating the law."

The publicity contemplated by Mr. SULZER's amendment consisted of annual statements from corporations engaged in interstate or foreign commerce of their capital, debts, obligations due to them from officers, assets and methods of valuation of the same, gross earnings, surplus available for dividends and dividends actually declared, increase of assets since last report, names, addresses and respective holdings of stockholders, stock issues since last report, names and addresses of officers, location of transfer or registry offices, and proportion of goods going into interstate commerce. In addition to these facts, the corporation would have been obliged by the law to file with the bureau regularly every year the following certificates of its innocence or confessions of its guilt, as the case might be:

"1. A statement showing that the corporation in question has not, during the period covered by the said report, received any rebates, drawbacks, special rates or discriminations, advantages or preferences, by money payments or otherwise, from any railroad, pipe line, water carrier, or other transportation company, or if any such have been received, or given, stating when, from whom, on what account, and in what manner they were so received, with all other details necessary to a full understanding of the transaction.

"2. A statement that the corporation has not fixed prices, or done any other act with a view to restricting trade or driving any competitor out of business.

"3. A statement that the corporation is or is not a party to any contract, combination or conspiracy in the form of a trust or otherwise, in restraint of trade or commerce among the several States or Territories or with foreign nations."

This disclosure of business and this plea of innocence or confession of guilt were to be supplemented by any additional information which the bureau might require from the corporation and the same, having been approved by the bureau, were to be published in the newspapers at the expense of the corporation. The fine for failing to report immediately upon the bureau's demand was fixed by Mr. SULZER at from 1 to 10 per cent. of the annual gross earnings for each day of recalcitrance. The penalty for a false report was to be from 2 to 20 per cent. of the gross earnings for each untrue statement. There were also provisions for further special inquiry into the affairs of any suspected trust, for the enforcement of the demands of the bureau by the Federal courts, and for the acceptance of the reports of the bureau's examiners in regard to any corporation's methods as *prima facie* true and as competent evidence in prosecution.

We have been thus particular in describing the rejected measure so industriously and elaborately wrought out by the once impetuous young Democratic statesman from the Eleventh because it will impress most students as conservative in contrast with the output of some of SULZER's rival trust-busters on the Republican side. Whatever may

be the demerits of his scheme in detail, however obviously false and dangerous may be the main principle of Federal inquiry on which he depends, the Hon. WILLIAM SULZER, the former Bryn Mawr and friend of the peep-ul appears here at no disadvantage when the processes of his mind are compared with those of the versatile chairman of the House Judiciary, of the venerable chairman and sage of the Senate Judiciary, of the accomplished Attorney-General of the United States, or even of the great and original LITTLEFIELD himself.

The Ellis Free Coal Bill.

Fortunately for this city, the Charter gave no authority to the Board of Aldermen to enforce the resolution passed by them a month ago appropriating \$250,000 to buy coal for the poor. It was promptly filed away by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, but the Ellis bill now before the Assembly aims at the same result. It is discreditable to the judgment of the man who introduced it, no matter what may have been his motives, and it should be killed promptly.

A letter signed by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the United Hebrew Charities, the State Charities Aid Association, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Charity Organization Society was sent to the Speaker of the Assembly last week opposing this bill. These organizations say that the demands upon charitable societies this winter have not increased above those that are usual at this season of the year, and thus far they have been fully met. Such an appropriation for the distribution of free coal would not only be a dangerous precedent, but in immediate results it would be even harmful.

The mere fact that the city had gone into the open market, where it would have to go, to purchase a quarter of a million dollars' worth of coal in the present conditions would send prices kiting. This in itself would be bad enough, but the real difficulty would appear with the time of distribution. Possibly our Aldermen would like to have this distribution in their own hands.

It is a fact that the people who have suffered most from the lack of coal during the past two months in this city have not been those who are accustomed to buy their coal by the pail. The very poor, who could go to the various woodyards and distributing stations and purchase their coal in small quantities, have been able to get it at all times, while those who usually purchase their coal in several tons have at times been unable to buy it at any price. There is no strong demand for charity coal in New York, but merely for an opportunity to buy coal at a reasonable price.

Probably not one of the regularly organized charities in this city would attempt the distribution of such a large quantity of free coal, nor has the Commissioner of Charities any facilities for distributing it. How, then, would the Aldermen in favor of this measure propose to get this coal into the hands of the very poor who cannot afford to buy it?

It may not be inopportune to recall the fund of \$20,000 that was raised so generously by Tammany Hall in 1893 for the purpose of buying coal for the poor. There was at that time no scarcity of coal, but it was alleged that owing to the severe weather the poor of the city were in urgent need of help in this particular way. This fund was turned over to Commissioner KELLER to distribute. It was possible as late as the following April to buy for a small price in the lower East Side districts tickets calling for half a ton each of this charity coal. Undoubtedly some acute cases of want were relieved by this charity, but the results showed that the situation had been greatly exaggerated.

At the present time, according to the various charity organizations, the demands of the poor are no greater than usual at this time of the year. There is work aplenty for every able-bodied man in this city. Even if it were possible to do it properly, this is no time for a free coal distribution. The Ellis bill should be squelched in a manner to discourage any further reckless charity legislation of this kind.

The Jaw of Friscilla.

The tale comes from Salt Lake, and salt must have been put on it before it was caught. But for the moment, we are collectors, not critics. Then pause, O pause, and hold your jaws; taut be your "slack" and tighter; while we present the accident to Miss FRISCILLA LATER, Mrs. MARY COULTER, president of the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs, is also a member, the sole woman member, of the Utah Legislature. Mrs. COULTER voted for the Hon. REED SMOOT in the Republican Senatorial caucus. Did she do right in doing so? That was the question which Miss LATER was discussing, when something snapped, and she dropped and stopped. She was maintaining the affirmative with great eloquence when her jaw gave out; it was discovered that "the bone had jumped out of place." A doctor was sent for, and then some of the other clubwomen got a chance to talk, says the cynic who sent the despatch from Salt Lake to THE SUN.

Comparative mythologists will not be likely to accept this story. It has the earmarks, the long ears of a myth. It is not even a saga, an account of an event believed by the relator to be actual and historical. When an anecdote is too pat, distrust it. When a story is too "well found," laugh at it. If you choose, and it deserves to be rewarded with laughter. In the case of a story about a member of a woman's club, *cherchez l'homme*—look for the fellow that made it up.

The motive is clear. You hear more than enough about the loquacity of women. Is there any more garrulous animal than man? Study the parrots, the sparrows, the magpies and the monkeys. The study their cognates in the club or in the country railroad station or barber's shop. You cannot

deny that man is garrulous or that he wants to do all the talking himself. The sound of his own voice is the sweetest music to him, whether he be the village statesman in town meeting or before a much-expectorating audience and a light-air stove in the grocery store or whether he be the spoiled and inebriate after-dinner orator of New York. We are all chronic monologists, instinctive monopolists of talk. Few, among men, are the martyrs who can bring themselves to listen; yet how common are such martyrs among women. You hear Mr. GUMP or Mr. SUMPH, prosing, droning, driving away limply. You can escape him, perhaps. At the worst, you can kill him and be acquitted by a jury of your countrymen. But think of Mrs. GUMP and Mrs. SUMPH. By HARPOCRATES and all other gods of silence, think of that! Think of laughing, year in and year out, at the same marvellous old jokes; of hearing the same tedious and pointless stories; of erroneous reminiscences, cheap wisdom, stale reflections. Think of living for years and years with that human telephone, that relentless photograph in gaiters and a bald head. Some day we are going to write our Book of Martyrs. There will be no man in it. It will record a few among the innumerable wives, the patient GRIZZELS who listen and smile patiently and pretend not to notice—may the amiable deities have due recompense in heaven!—that their husbands are leaky, sloppy, drooling, overbearing talkers and yawners.

After long ages of silence and suppression, the woman folks have found their tongues. They do a little talking on their own account. Some of them have clubs. Some of them speak from platforms and pulpits, much as the imperial intellectuals in trousers and whiskers do. Mark, however, the more merciful nature feminine. Women are always dragged to hear men spout. Most of the woman talk is made in feminine adyta to which men are not admitted. The women don't force us to go and hear 'em. Their powers of speech don't injure us. Their eloquence doesn't interfere with our own. Sherwood Forest in its greenest days never held so many stags as there will be "stag" dinners to-night; and ROBIN HOOD and all the rest of his merry men never blew so many horns as men will blow to-night and every night in celebration of themselves. Yet a girl in Utah dares to make a speech at a women's club, and at once the myth-makers plunge her into maxillary wreck and hold her up as a warning and horrible example to her sisters.

We have seen a few cases of dislocation of the jaw in our time; and every one was caused by yawning caused by eight-days-a-week, never-run-down, perpetual-motion male talkers or orators.

Another Duty for the Mayor.

Mayor Low's defence of the Aqueduct Commission against the criticisms of the Merchants' Association with reference to the delay in building the Croton dam has the ring of fairness in it. The chief cause of trouble, the eight-hour law, was not considered by the merchants, we believe, and, of course, the Mayor, a disciple of the economic or rather political school that upholds the law, puts no blame on it in his answer. He did his duty, however, in defending the Commissioners on the points on which they were attacked.

The excise question puts on the Mayor another duty. In view of the new Police Commissioner's activity as to Sunday enforcement, would it be anything more than justice to the saloonkeepers for the Mayor to announce that hereafter the law is to be enforced, this announcement to be as public and as official as his former announcement that the law in question would not be enforced? We wonder what poor PARTRIDGE thinks.

A Curious Modification of Interstate Commerce.

A curious modification of interstate commerce is suggested by Governor ARCOCK of North Carolina in a letter to Governor TENNELL of Georgia. If the Governor of North Carolina will "gladly write a pardon for any Georgian, now doing time in the North Carolina prisons, whom the Governor of Georgia may designate," this is an even and a fair proposition for the exchange of prisoners. Why should little considerations of justice be allowed to interfere with courtesies between Governors? Give me my convict in your State and you shall have any convict in my State that you ask for. There you have a simple and open offer. The North Carolina in the Cracker dungeon "is the son of one of the State's most prominent families." North Carolina must have him back. Sons of prominent families must not be allowed to languish in the "clink." If the Governor of Georgia has a liberal mind, he will release the prominent scion at once and bring some Georgian exile home from captivity among the Tar Heels.

I am a candidate for the nomination of City Treasurer.—COPD. ARNOLD (JAMES ARNOLD). If there is gratitude in Chicago to a great public character; if there is respect in Chicago for a monument of history, Capt. ARNOLD's ambition will be satisfied. As far back as the cloudy past we can gaze, the white stockings of Father ARNOLD shine like Alps. We will not say that he invented baseball, but he brought it down to earth. Haymakers and Mutuels and Atlantics, Beacons and Trimountains have fallen and vanished. As we think of Daddy ARNOLD, yells begin to form in our ancient larynx and we see strong men and boys standing on the roofs of houses, nested in trees, coming up from the bowels of the earth, pecking through knotholes in the fence. The boy that sold us our first score card died of old age in Ulster yesterday. And here is "Daddy ARNOLD," "Pop" ARNOLD, unscarred by time, unimpaired in wind, sound and kind. Make him City Treasurer! Why let it all, he ought to be Governor, President.

Another healthy member of our Hundred-Year Class, Mrs. JAMES SWARTZ, 92, of Philadelphia, was spoken of as we began to read the *Philadelphia Sunday*. She was taken from "a little fireless cabin" to a hole "which had been out in the eight-inch ice on the stream." A woman of enduring stuff and fit to live. Too many of us who are a good deal nearer thirty-two or forty-two than ninety-two, expand and glow with satisfaction and honest pride when we jump into a cold bath for a moment. We are not sure that the cold bath isn't as immediate a stimulus of Phariseism and virtuous satisfaction as any other cause. Let us be less sleek and not purr

so much as we contemplate ourselves. We are in the valley yet and the heights are yet to be climbed. If we can bathe in the Delaware or the Hudson, with the thermometer near zero when we are near 100, why then we have some right to admire ourselves and bask our friends with accounts of our wonderful constitution.

Before forming any conclusions about the performance of the somewhat notorious Panther at Maracibo, let us know the actual facts, and hear also the necessary explanation of the German Government. There is no occasion yet for emotion of any sort.

What is South Carolina going to do with Lieutenant-Governor TILMAN, the murderer of GORHAM? Justice to that State requires that justice be done to TILMAN.

In some of his personal characteristics the late M. DE BLOWITZ faintly resembled the elder DUMAS. Amazing cheerfulness, unquerable self-complacency, indefatigable assurance, rotundity of countenance and more or less of the historic imagination distinguished the industrious person who for so many years, through the columns of the *London Times*, kept the British public well informed about the doings of the chancelleries and of DE BLOWITZ. But there the faint resemblance to DUMAS stopped.

It has been recognized from the first that there would be a difficulty in passing a trust measure through the House, no matter how radical its provisions might be.—WASHINGTON DESPATCH in the *New York Tribune*.

Is this true? Is the lower branch of Congress a mere mob of populism, or a helpless subject of the Executive lash? The Tribune's despatch means, of course, that the only safety for our political and commercial interests is in the Senate.

The Senate is frequently the subject of foolish criticism, but no charge of degradation has ever been brought against it as that made in the Tribune against the House of Representatives.

Apt Quotations.—To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Let me get on the record a little strenuous philosophy from the "Life of Gouverneur Morris," by Theodore Roosevelt. I quote:

"The Morris showed the utter futility of one of the pet schemes of revolutionary financial vision, the regulation of prices by law. Hard times, then as now, always produced not a law but a rebellion in the market. A number of political demagogues who trucked to it. The people, moreover, like to lay the blame for their misfortunes neither on fate nor on themselves, but on some unfortunate outsider, and they were especially apt to attack as 'monopolists' the men who had purchased necessary supplies in large quantities to profit by their rise in price. They passed law against them; and Morris showed in his essays the unwisdom of such legislation.—Pages 100-101.

Morris believed in using the United States instead of out doing a rebellion in a State, even though the Executive of the State himself should be at the head of it, and he was supported in his views by Buckley.—Page 145.

Most citizens of the present day will agree with him (Morris) that "the excesses rarely that the deficiency of laws is what we have to dread."—Page 146.

Anarchy is the handmaid of tyranny.—Page 145.

The last precept was illustrated during the last strike. E. S.

NEW YORK, Jan. 19.

Colombia and Common Decency.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Will you permit a Western lawyer, passing through your city, to suggest a possible solution of the Panama Canal problem?

The so-called republics of Central and South America are under the deepest obligation to us for preventing European aggression upon their territory. Common decency would require Colombia to give up the narrow strip of land we seek. But for the announcement of President Monroe and our readiness to stand by his doctrine, the whole southern continent would long ago have been colonized by European Powers.

Now, for this protest, Colombia is now attempting to "sandbag" us.

We have assumed a species of sovereignty of these countries, and as long as they profited thereby they have gladly acquiesced; and now, to our surprise, we are asked to give up the territory we have acquired, and to stand by the doctrine of President Monroe.

Bottom Cause of the Secrecy of Coal.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: The popular mind is so excited over the secrecy of coal that calm judgment is not exercised, and any and every cause is seized upon as a pretext for the correct one is accepted. Consequently proper remedy is doubtful.

Neither the railroads nor the coal operators are responsible for the terrible conditions obtaining in the mines. Two leading causes obtain.

First, is the miner. He refuses to work steadily, and when he works refuses to do a full day's work, and much of the time he is idle. This is the cause of the time he is idle. A case in point: The miners of Pennsylvania quit for a strike on the 1st of January. The fact, as it did last fall, throws all its sympathy to the miner and makes him doubly defiant and indignant. The miner population is composed of a class having no sympathy with American life, are non-assimilating, are fanatical in principle, and are simply a huge body controlled by an unprincipled force having but power and its ill-effects in view. What is needed is repeal of the laws which give the right to any body or organization to demand the strike of the miner, and which will give to the operator the power to discharge and hire whom he pleases.

Here lies the principal cause of the secrecy of coal, and the excessive cost in producing it. Not to exceed 20 to 25 days can be counted on in the year for coal output. These 25 days are beyond the power of the operator and railroad to correct because the miner is controlled by laws issued under the last of the miners' organization, and its control by politicians. The country is in ignorance of the fact, as it did last fall, throws all its sympathy to the miner and makes him doubly defiant and indignant. The miner population is composed of a class having no sympathy with American life, are non-assimilating, are fanatical in principle, and are simply a huge body controlled by an unprincipled force having but power and its ill-effects in view. What is needed is repeal of the laws which give the right to any body or organization to demand the strike of the miner, and which will give to the operator the power to discharge and hire whom he pleases.

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